

Milden Parish Meeting – Tuesday 28th April 2015

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th April 2015 in Milden Pavilion at 7pm

Chairman: Angus Cundey
Treasurer: Sandy De'Ath
Clerk: Sara Godfrey

Present: James Finch, Bryn Hurren, Myranda Cundey, Stephen Morley, Christopher Hawkins, Joy Morley, Jan Ditheridge, Mark Isahak, John Fulcher, Amanda Fulcher, Sally Miles, Adrian Miles, Tissa Rigby, Pearl Gee, Kevin Warren, Anne Warren, Denise Thomas, Janet Meyer, Jo Eggby, Asha Eggby

The Chairman announced the sad death of Michael Hawkins two days earlier. In recognition and deep appreciation of his many years of dedicated service to the village a minutes silence was held. The funeral is on 15th May at 2.30pm.

1. Apologies for absence

were received from Rosy Porteous Butler, Tony Ditheridge, John Rigby, Scott Hurrell, Justine Turner and Dick Histed.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th November 2015

The minutes had been distributed before the meeting. These were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Stephen Morley Seconded: Tissa Rigby

3. Matters arising from those minutes.

Sara Godfrey updated the meeting on the highways and byways issues raised in the last meeting. The current status at the time of writing is as follows

Uneven road levels outside Milden Church – works ordered 29/4/2015

Pothole outside Chancels Croft – works ordered 29/4/2015

Potholes and poor road edges in two locations on Boxford Road raised by Stephen Morley were reported to the County Council using the online reporting system on 30/4/2015.

Council workers seen marking up the road for repairs 30/4/2015.

Faded road marking at the southern entrance to the village also reported via the online system on 30/4/2015.

Ongoing bridleway issues reported again to the County Council via the online reporting system. Swingleton Hill (ref 3569134 reported 30/4/2105) and Pound Lane (ref 3624963 reported 30/4/2015). Tissa Rigby reported that she had bumped into Kevin Verlander, the gentleman from SCC now in charge of our byways. It was agreed that we all keep pressing for action.

4. Parish Liaison Officer's Report.

No report as no officer attended.

Sara Godfrey highlighted the monthly crime report email from SNT Babergh which details crimes on a parish by parish basis. She distributes this by email to all on her distribution list, anyone wishing to add their name to the distribution list should advise her directly.

5. County Councillor's Report.

Councillor Finch presented his report to the meeting, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. There was additional discussion on the subject of superfast broadband.

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Councillor Finch reported that the second contract will be rolled out in October and we will find out if Milden has been included at that time. If we are not included there will be an interim solution provided in the form of a subsidised satellite connection. The County Council will provide a voucher (worth approximately £400-£500) to cover the cost of connection, the homeowner will be responsible for the ongoing monthly cost. The satellite connection speed is expected to be about 8-10 Mbps and we should have this by Q1 2016. The survey work for the second contract is going on now. Councillor Finch suggested an extraordinary meeting to discuss this with Jonathan Chown, the individual responsible at SCC, for those parishioners who are interested. This suggestion was very warmly received.

The chairman extended the meetings thanks to Councillor Finch for his interesting and informative report.

6. District Councillor's Report

Councillor Hurren gave his report. The financial situation continues to be challenging at Babergh. There has been no increase in the District council's part of the Council tax for the past 3 years. The government grant continues to decrease and will eventually be phased out.

Savings have been made by partnering with Mid-Suffolk District Council. Introducing car parking charges in Sudbury and Hadleigh have been suggested as a revenue stream, however Councillor Hurren has always campaigned against this as he believes it would have a disastrous effect on our market town centres.

Recycling is operated under a Suffolk-wide partnership. Councillor Hurren encouraged everyone to put as much rubbish in the blue bin as possible. Over 90% of the blue bin contents are sold and provides a revenue stream. Contents of the black bin incur a charge either for landfill or the new incinerator at Blakenham. The latter, is a significant improvement because it reduces landfill, provides electricity for 30,000 homes and heat for a local tomato producer.

Councillor Hurren opposed the proposed solar farm at Edwardstone as it would have used 66 acres of good fertile land and been a blot on the landscape. This proposal has recently been turned down on appeal. He was also instrumental in keeping Tesco's out of Hadleigh.

A further cost saving measure, championed by Councillor Hurren has been the introduction of solar panels on 2,200 council houses across the district. 14 are in the Boxford ward and 4 have already been installed. It is hoped this will generate £7m through savings and feed-in tariff income for the council over 20 years.

Housing continues to be a major issue in the district. We now have a reasonable amount of affordable housing in Boxford, where there is significant local need.

Tourism is booming in the district and Councillor Hurren continues to support and encourage local businesses, for example the cattery in Milden which the council were recommending to refuse on the recommendation of the Highways Department. Councillor Hurren is working hard to keep Post Office services in Boxford either at the current site or in the grocery store.

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Councillor Hurren is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Quay Theatre in Sudbury. The financial position of the theatre has been markedly improved under his leadership. He provided the summer brochure for those present and encourage all to make use of this fantastic local asset.

The chairman extended the meetings thanks to Councillor Hurren for looking after us all so well and added that we are all extremely grateful.

7. Finance Report

The Treasurer gave the financial report for March 2015

The Precept for this next financial year 2015/16 was increased by 2% as agreed at last Parish Meeting in November 2014, but because we also receive a grant which is decreasing by 25% every year then the actual amount is approximately the same at £901. The tax base for Milden has gone up again this year by 3.6% which means we all actually pay slightly less per household for our precept.

The carry over of funds from last year was £783. However when the cost of ½ the grass cutting of the Recreation Field is taken out of this sum (Babergh District Council have been late in presenting us with this bill) then the actual figure is in effect £433. This is slightly less than last years carry over of £479. We are therefore spending slightly more than we bring in from the precept. With this in mind Mr Adrian Miles in his capacity as Chairman of the Milden Pavilion Committee kindly offered to consider shouldering more of the cost of the grass cutting for next year and agreed to discuss this at the next Pavilion committee meeting.

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 were explained by the Treasurer and accepted by the meeting having been proposed by Adrian Miles and seconded by Denise Thomas. The accounts were signed by the Chairman. Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return were approved by the Meeting and signed by the Chairman, Treasurer and Clerk.

The Budget was reviewed and accepted by the Meeting.

8. Pavilion/Recreation Ground.

Adrian Miles gave the Pavilion report. The Pavilion continues to be self-funding with cricket club fees, hire fees and fund raising activities bringing in income. The current bank balance is of the order of £2000 due to recent expenditure on new cricket nets and an electronic piano for the Milden Singers.

The Milden Singers “Get in the Country Mood” concerts are taking place next weekend, 8th and 9th of May. Tickets are available from Pearl ([tel:01449 741876](tel:01449741876)).

The Milden Ball is being held on Friday 6th November at Milden Hall, with kind thanks to Christopher and Juliet Hawkins. Tickets are nearly sold out and are £32.50 each in aid of the Pavilion and Church fabric.

The cricket club is doing well and the pitch is widely regarded as one of the best in the area.

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Justine Turner has indicated that she would like to stand down as secretary of the Pavilion Committee due to other commitments. She will stay on until a replacement is found.

9. Stansted Expansion

In the absence of Dick Histed this was not discussed.

10. Planning Matters - Pound Farm Planning Application

The meeting was told that the proposed development of three houses developed from the existing farm buildings had be resubmitted to the council for approval. Councillor Hurren said that this would be refused as the current farm buildings were not sustainable and could not be re-used.

There followed a lengthy discussion about what should be done with the site with views ranging from “nothing at all” to a development of smaller properties, possibly social housing (although there is no demonstrable need currently). Cars entering and leaving the site on that dangerous corner was mentioned as an issue also there was concern that development might set a precedent in a rural area. There was no consensus of opinion. Councillor Hurren informed the meeting that as Milden was designated as “open countryside” that the council would not give permission for any new build. The Chairman, however, was concerned about a scenario where the council may be overruled by a developer in the situation where land for building had not been identified. Councillor Hurren was of the view that this could only be relevant where there was a significant and demonstrable need for new housing. As Milden has neither the infrastructure nor facilities he held the view that any new housing would be located in so-called “core villages” such as Boxford and Lavenham.

The Chairman introduced the subject of a Village Plan. He felt that if Milden had an agreed Village Plan then we would be in a better position to deal with potential developers and Babergh in the event of a proposed development. Joy Morley asked for clarification on the exact nature of a Village Plan. Councillor Hurren made it clear that it would have to be agreed by all villagers and that in the absence of demonstrable need in Milden it may be an unnecessary expense. To this end the Chairman is initiating a discussion with relevant people at Babergh to see if a Village Plan is necessary. A meeting to be attended by the Chairman and the clerk has been arranged for 12th May with Sunila Osborne, Community Development Officer - Rural Affordable Housing.

11. Correspondence

There was no correspondence

12. Any Other Business

There was none.

The next meeting will be in November 2015, a date will be advised in due course.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.40p.m.

A Report for Milden Parish Meeting – 28th April 2015
From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley
12 months of Achievements at Suffolk County Council - 2014-15

- **SCC freezes council tax for fifth year in a row**

SCC's share of council tax is to be frozen for a fifth year in a row. This means that Suffolk residents will not pay any more than they did in 2010/11. The council has successfully delivered savings in excess of £130m over the last four years. However, with the government's deficit reduction programme set to continue until at least 2018/19, there is a forecast of a further £120m budget shortfall that will need to be addressed over the next three years.

- **Suffolk schools' ascent of league tables confirmed**

Figures out last month confirmed the trend of improvement in Suffolk's relative position in educational attainment. In data released by the government in January, Suffolk has climbed 12 places in the national league table for GCSE results since the previous year; from 137th to 125th out of 151 local authorities. This means we are getting ever closer to bridging the gap between ourselves and the national average. There has been slow but inexorable improvement, with the gap between Suffolk and the national average narrowing to 4.6% in 2013, and now, following 2014's results, to just 1.7%.

- **Suffolk first in the country to extend Better Broadband BDUK programme**

Plans to extend the roll-out of super-fast broadband to more households and business were signed October. Along with other commercial and existing programmes, the contract aims to extend the coverage of fibre broadband to 95% of homes and businesses in Suffolk. The £15m capital grant from BDUK will be locally matched by £5m from the New Anglia LEP's Local Growth Fund and £10m from SCC. The roadside fibre broadband cabinets that are being connected to the network serve very localised areas, so not all parts of the towns and villages where they are located will be able to receive fibre broadband initially. As the service becomes increasingly available, people should use the 'Better Broadband for Suffolk' website (www.betterbroadbandsuffolk.com) to check to see if their home or business can receive faster broadband services.

- **Multi-million-pound investment in skills secured**

Businesses and local councils are joining forces with the government to invest more than £18 million in equipping people with the skills local businesses need. The investment will be used to fund projects set out in the Greater Ipswich City Deal including a new youth employment centre in Ipswich and an incentive scheme to encourage businesses to invest in training. The money includes at least £4.5million to be invested in skills and training by local businesses in Suffolk and Norfolk and will fund employer-designed projects that

will aim to halve youth unemployment in the Greater Ipswich area over the next two years.

○ **UK's first Youth Employment Centre opens in Suffolk**

The UK's first-ever dedicated youth employment centre this winter. The MyGo centre will offer all 16-24 year olds in Ipswich and the surrounding area free training, career and employment support. The project is funded through the Greater Ipswich City Deal - the government's flagship programme to devolve power to local authorities and businesses to put them in control of economic opportunities and challenges.

○ **Drive to create 5,000 new apprenticeships to address skills shortage**

A £1.5million campaign aimed at doubling the number of apprenticeships in Suffolk and creating thousands of new jobs and training opportunities for young people was launched during the year.

● **Suffolk's waste creates energy in Blakenham on time.**

£8million a year is the expected amount to be saved for Suffolk's tax payers by diverting Suffolk's waste from Landfill to this plant. The plant was opened on time and on budget last December 2014. The Energy from Waste Plant (EFW) is designed to handle up to 269,000 tonnes of waste each year. This is now working to capacity with SCC committed to sending 196,000 tonnes for treatment.

● **Suffolk County Council pledge to tackle Mental Health**

In February this year, Suffolk County Council have signed the Time to Change Organisational Pledge. "The Time to Change organisational pledge, signed on World Mental Health Day, is a public statement of aspiration that as an organisation, Suffolk County Council with the NHS in Suffolk will tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. The council has submitted an action plan to Time to Change which demonstrates how this pledge will be carried out. This is a significant step forward for Suffolk County Council, as we aspire to eradicate discrimination and the stigma of mental ill-health.

My priorities for Suffolk

*Education - Supporting Vulnerable People - Jobs and Growth
Localism and the Stour Valley - Building on Suffolk's Strength –
all underpinned by strong financial management and low council tax*

James Finch 27th April 2015

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